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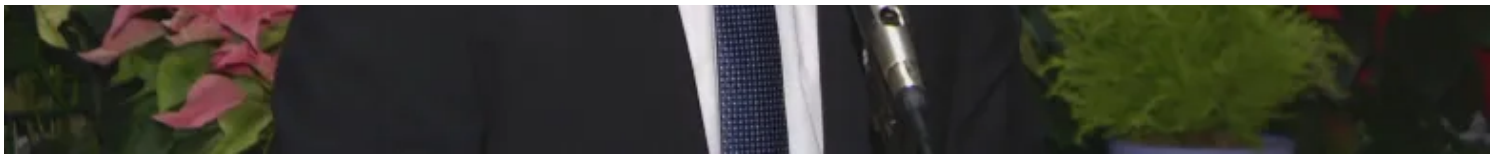
Saskatoon

Looser care home visitation rules 'not going to be possible right now,' Sask. minister for seniors says

Chief medical health officer adds that province needs to remain 'very cautious about visitation'

Guy Quenneville · CBC News · Posted: Dec 09, 2020 12:23 PM CT | Last Updated: December 9, 2020



Everett Hindley, Saskatchewan's Minister for Seniors, speaks to reporters at the legislative assembly on Tuesday. (CBC)

comments

Saskatchewan's Minister Responsible for Seniors Everett Hindley says allowing more people to visit loved ones inside long-term care homes is "not going to be possible right now."

Hindley made the remarks Tuesday at the legislative assembly, about a week after Premier Scott Moe expressed hope for Christmas visits at extended care homes.

The province has restricted care home visitation in recent weeks to only allow visits from people with loved ones in end-of-life care or whose care needs are being unmet.

"You know, there was a period of time where we were thinking that it would might be possible to perhaps ease up on those restrictions," Hindley said. "Clearly, that's not going to be possible right now in the case of extended care."

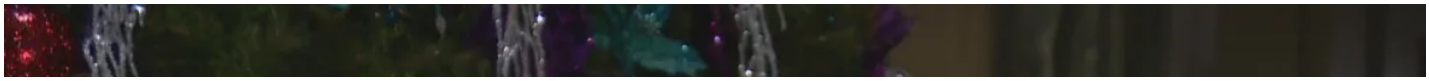
- **Sask. premier offers hope for Christmas care home visits. A lonely resident says she'd rather not risk it**

There are now more than 200 cases of COVID-19 inside Saskatchewan care homes, according to the latest province-wide update released by health officials. That's up from 86 cases on Nov. 26.

On Wednesday, Saskatchewan's chief medical health officer Dr. Saqib Shahab said the risks of allowing Christmas visits in long-term care homes would be "very high."

"I think we just need to think [this] through very carefully," he said. "My recommendation from a public health perspective is that we are very cautious about visitation, really support the staff and the residents and sustain COVID free as much as possible."

Moe has previously said a final decision will not be made until Dec. 17 at the earliest.



Saskatchewan NDP Leader Ryan Meili says the provincial government should have better prepared for potential COVID-19 outbreaks considering what's happened in other provinces. (CBC)

Saskatchewan NDP Leader Ryan Meili has accused the government of not doing enough to prevent long-term care outbreaks, in light of outbreaks that happened in care homes in Ontario and Quebec earlier in the pandemic.

"This is a government that did nothing to prepare long-term care, a system that has been under a great deal of pressure, understaffed, overcrowded for years," Meili said.

- **Fire Department called in, 2 more residents dead in outbreak at Regina's Extendicare home**

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